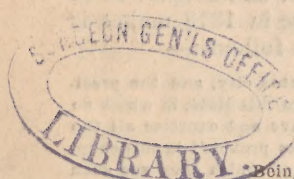


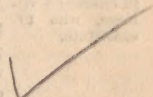
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CIRCULAR TO HEALTH OFFICERS,
RELATIVE TO THE WORK
OF
HEALTH OFFICERS
AND OF
LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH
IN MICHIGAN.



CIRCULAR NO. 35,

Being a modification of Circular No. 23, issued by the
STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
OF MICHIGAN.



[35.]

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH, }
LANSING, MICHIGAN, January, 1880. }

*To the Health Officer:**

SIR:—A number of Health Officers, appointed under Act No. 56, Laws of Michigan, 1877, which provides for a Health Officer in every township, city, and village in the State, have asked for an outline of the duties of this officer as a "sanitary adviser" of the local board of health. In order to respond to these inquiries more fully than by the letters and documents already sent, this circular is issued.

The constitution of township boards of health was changed in 1877, sections 1692 and 1693 being so amended as to provide that "in every township the township board shall be the board of health," and that "every township [city, and village†] board of health shall appoint and constantly have a health officer of the township, who shall, where practicable, be a physician and sanitary adviser, and an executive officer of the board." If no health officer is ap-

* A sufficient number of copies of this circular, stating duties of the health officer, are sent to enable you to give one copy to each member of your local board of health; and you are respectfully requested to do this, in order that the local board which controls your action and fixes your compensation may have the benefit of its suggestions as to the importance, nature, value, and extent of your duties.

† Section 1740, compiled laws of 1871, as amended by Act No. 143, laws of 1879, provides that "all duties which are, by the provisions of this chapter [46], to be performed by the board of health of townships, or by the officers and inhabitants thereof, shall in like manner be performed by the board of health and the officers and inhabitants of such cities and villages, with a like penalty for the non-performance of such duties, excepting in cases where the charters of such cities and villages contain provisions inconsistent herewith."

pointed "within thirty days after the annual township meeting," it will still be necessary to appoint or re-appoint one after that time, as in the case of a vacancy. Vacancies occur whenever the incumbent of an office ceases to be an inhabitant of the district, county, township, city, or village for which he was elected or appointed an officer,—see section 617, compiled laws of Michigan, 1871.

Before entering upon his duties the health officer should take and subscribe the official oath required by Sec. 1, Art. xviii. of the Constitution of this State, and file the same in the office of the clerk of the city, village, or township of which he is the Health Officer.

Some of the powers and duties of local boards of health are specified in Chapter 46 of the compiled laws of Michigan, 1871. This chapter was constructed more particularly with reference to township boards of health, but section 49 of the same chapter (chapter 35 of the Revised Statutes of 1846, and chapter 46 of the compiled laws of 1871) as amended by the Legislature in 1879 makes it apply to cities and villages. That section as amended is as follows:—

<p>Board of health in cities and villages, who to constitute.</p>	<p>(1740.) SEC. 49. The mayor and aldermen of each incorporated city, and the president and council, or trustees of each incorporated village in this State, in which no board of health is organized under its charter, shall have and exercise all the powers and perform all the duties of a board of health as provided in this chapter, within the limits of the cities or villages, respectively, of which they are such officers. The provisions of this chapter, and the amendments thereto, shall, as far as</p>
<p>Duties of officers and inhabitants of cities and villages.</p>	<p>applicable, apply to all cities and villages in this State, and all duties which are, by the provisions of this chapter, to be performed by the board of health of townships, or by the officers and inhabitants thereof, shall in like manner be performed by the board of health and the officers and inhabitants of such cities and villages, with a like penalty for the non-performance of such duties, excepting in cases where the charters of such cities and villages contain provisions inconsistent herewith.</p>

It is believed that there is nothing in the charter of any city or village in the State that conflicts with the general law which requires the appointment of a Health Officer, either by the council acting as a board of health, or by a board of health constituted under some charter provision.

One great object in securing a physician as Health Officer was to enable each local board of health to lead and not, as too frequently heretofore, to follow the people in sanitary knowledge and action. As a rule our physicians are our leading sanitarians, and they know much better than other people what are the sources of danger to the public health in their several localities; and, as a rule, they know best how to avoid those dangers. It is therefore for the interest of the people to secure the benefits of that knowledge by paying for the services and advice of the best sanitarian, who will usually be the best physician, in their locality.

If it is true that responsibilities are in proportion to capacities and powers, then a local board of health, which, as in this State, has almost absolute power, must be held responsible for any sickness or death that might have been prevented by a proper use of its legal powers; and an individual Health Officer employed and paid for sanitary advice who does not use the sanitary knowledge of which he is possessed, in a way to make it as effective as possible for preventing sickness and deaths in his vicinity, is especially culpable.

Act No. 157, laws of 1879, makes it the duty of every health officer of a village or city to give notice, to the prosecuting attorney of the county,* of any failure in householders or physicians to report cases of communicable dis-

* Section 6855, compiled laws of 1871, requires the Prosecuting Attorney to prosecute for any forfeiture within his county.

eases to the health officer or to the local board of health. The act makes no exceptions on account of any other similar provisions in local charters or ordinances. Omitting the title, the act is as follows:—

SECTION 1. *The People of the State of Michigan enact*, That it shall be the duty of the health officer of each village and city in this State, whenever he shall know, or have good reason to believe that any penalty or forfeiture has been incurred within his city or village, by reason of neglect to comply with section one thousand seven hundred and thirty-four or section one thousand seven hundred and thirty-five of the compiled laws of eighteen hundred and seventy-one, forthwith to give notice thereof, in writing, to the prosecuting attorney of his county, which notice shall state, as near as may be, the time of such neglect, the name of the person incurring the penalty or forfeiture, and, as near as can be ascertained, the name or names of persons sick with a disease dangerous to the public health, and not reported as the law requires.

Health officer to notify prosecuting attorney of all failures to report.
What notice to state.

Although as “an executive officer of the board” your power and authority to act will be only that given you by your board, as a “sanitary adviser” you should, and doubtless will, have influence in determining the action of your board, in proportion to your knowledge of sanitary science and your honest effort for the promotion of the public health.

The health officer should be a physician who has given and will give special study to sanitary subjects, and who is qualified to instruct and advise the local board of health in all matters relating to public health which may come before it. The law provides that he shall be a sanitary adviser of the local board of health. In order that his advice may be had to the fullest extent, it seems necessary that generally the health officer should meet with the local board of health, and the local board of health is authorized to fix his compensation, which should include his services at meetings of the board, compensation for his services in reporting to the State Board of Health, etc.

There are many directions in which you can advise your local board of health how to put forth effort for lessening sickness and deaths within its jurisdiction:—

I. EPIDEMICS SHOULD BE PREVENTED.—This can generally be done, if local boards of health will but act efficiently in studying out and applying methods which are now practicable.

As regards small-pox, the legislature of 1879 made an additional provision for its restriction and the first general provision for its prevention, by an act authorizing the board of health of each city, village, and township in the State to offer free vaccination to every child not previously vaccinated, and to all other persons who have not been vaccinated within the preceding five years. This law enables local boards of health better to carry out the recommendation contained in a preamble and resolution of the State Board of Health, adopted in July, 1877, and distributed in leaflet form, as follows:—

THE PREVENTION AND RESTRICTION OF SMALL-POX.

At the regular meeting, July 10, 1877, the Michigan State Board of Health adopted the following preamble and resolution:—

WHEREAS, By means of vaccination and revaccination the people may secure complete immunity from small-pox,—

Resolved, That all local boards of health be advised and requested to direct their health physicians to offer, every year, vaccination with bovine vaccine virus to every child not previously vaccinated, and to all other persons not vaccinated within five years, without cost to the vaccinated, but at the general expense of the locality, as provided for townships in section 1736, compiled laws, 1871.

(Reliable bovine vaccine virus can be obtained of Dr. George E. Ranney, Lansing, Michigan.)

Office of the
SECRETARY OF THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH, }
Lansing, Michigan, August, 1877.

HENRY B. BAKER, *Secretary*.

The law passed in 1879 is as follows (Act No. 146):—

SECTION 1. *The People of the State of Michigan enact*, That the board of health in each city, village, and township may, at any time, direct its health officer or health physician to offer vaccination with bovine vaccine virus to every child not previously vaccinated, and to all other persons who have not been vaccinated within the preceding five years, without cost to the persons [person] vaccinated, but at the expense of such city, village, or township, as the case may be.

Vaccination and revaccination are preventives of small-pox, and if the people are kept thoroughly protected in this way it is believed that no epidemic of that disease can occur.

Epidemics of communicable diseases can frequently be prevented by restricting outbreaks to the first cases which occur.

II. PROMPT NOTICE OF OUTBREAKS OF DISEASE SHOULD BE SECURED.—For the most effective restriction of *all communicable diseases* one of the first requisites is that your board shall *promptly receive notice of every case* of a communicable disease. The law makes provision therefor; see sections 1734, 1735, 6852, 6853, and 6855, Compiled Laws of Michigan, 1871, and the act printed above (No. 157, laws of 1879), relative to complaints by health officers for failure to report cases of diseases dangerous to the public health. It is especially desirable that the attention of the public in your vicinity be called to the requirements of these sections of the law, and the facts impressed upon the minds of the people that safety from communicable diseases can be secured only by giving prompt notice of the first case and of all cases of any such disease, to the health officer or local board of health, in order that immediate steps may be taken for restricting and suppressing such disease. To complete the provision for such notices is one of the first duties of your board. It is again recommended that your board of health *have a sufficient number of blanks for such notices* for the use of *householders* and *physicians* distributed within your jurisdiction, in order to call attention to the law and secure the material for a complete record in your office and in the office of the clerk of your board. The two sections of law, 1734 and 1735, and summary statements of sections 6852, 6853, and 6855, referred to above, and of act No. 157, laws of 1879, should be printed on the back of each blank. You can also find the form for such blanks for notices on pages 13 and 14 of the First Report (for 1873), on pages xiii. and xiv. of the Second Report, and on pages xxvi.—xxvii. of the Sixth Report of this Board (for 1878), also in amended form on the last leaf of the pamphlet "Circular 34, relative to Notices of Diseases which endanger the Public Health," a copy of which is sent herewith. These blanks can be purchased of W. S. George & Co., of Lansing, for one dollar per hundred.

III. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES SHOULD BE RESTRICTED.—When notice or information of the occurrence of a case of a communicable disease reaches the local board, **the board should act promptly for the restriction of the disease.** The prominent duties in this direction are:—

1. Prompt, thorough, and persistent isolation of the persons sick.
2. Public notice of infected places, as required by section 1732, compiled laws of 1871.
3. Thorough disinfection of rooms, and of all articles likely to be infected, before allowing their use by other persons*.

* For methods, see pamphlet entitled "Restriction and Prevention of Scarlet Fever," issued by this Board, reprinted in the Fifth Annual Report of this Board, for 1877; also a document on Restriction and Prevention of Diphtheria, reprinted on pages 86-89 of the Report for 1878; also an Address on General Sanitation, prepared by a committee of the Sanitary Council of the Mississippi Valley, printed on pages 34-36 of the Report for 1879.

4. As regards small-pox, the vaccination and revaccination of all inhabitants.

As so much frequently depends upon prompt action on notice of a first case of a communicable disease, every board of health should guard against delays in getting a meeting of the board etc., by giving its health officer explicit authority, and requiring him to act immediately on receipt of information of a case of such disease within his jurisdiction, without waiting for a meeting of the board, which, however, should meet as soon as possible.

IV. CASES OF DISEASES WHICH ENDANGER THE PUBLIC HEALTH SHOULD BE RECORDED.—Another duty incumbent upon the local board of health is the recording of the sickness from communicable diseases, and of the deaths of citizens and persons under its protection; such records to be for local use and also to be reported to this State Board, so that, when grouped with records of other localities, the conditions may be studied, and new methods of prevention learned from such unhappy experiences which otherwise will continually be repeated.

A form of "Record of Diseases Dangerous to the Public Health" is printed (reduced in size), at the end of this circular. You can procure printed sheets of such a record, on paper 15½ by 19½ inches, of W. S. George & Co., of Lansing, for eighty cents per quire or three dollars per hundred. If desired, the same dealers will bind them at usual prices.

It is hoped that hereafter you will, as Health Officer, be prepared and make a record of all important facts concerning "diseases dangerous to the public health" which may come under your observation or be reported to you. Aside from the importance of such a local record, it will enable you, when called upon, to make a full report to this State Board concerning cases of such diseases.*

V. MUCH SICKNESS AND MANY DEATHS FROM ORDINARY DISEASES SHOULD BE PREVENTED.—A field of labor, perhaps even wider than that with the communicable diseases, is open to your local board of health, namely, the inauguration of measures for preventing sickness and deaths from the ordinary diseases in this State, a very great proportion of which are now believed by our best sanitarians to be preventable. Some of the prominent measures to be inaugurated are:—

1. More thorough drainage of the soil, especially near dwellings.
2. Better securities against the contamination of the water-supply, particularly in wells, by filth-saturated soil, etc.
3. A strict guard over the purity of the air, and freedom from nuisances and unclean places.
4. Better sanitary and hygienic arrangements and plans in the public schools, and in public buildings and institutions.

In the execution of these measures, much may be accomplished by systematic and thorough inspections and by published reports of such inspections, which shall attract attention to the subject, give definite knowledge of existing defects, and suggest methods of improvement.

VI. NUISANCES SHOULD BE ABATED.—While it is not, as many suppose, the first and only duty of a health officer to smell out a cesspool or an offensive privy, he is the one to whom, from his official position and authority, the peo-

* Act No. 81, Laws of 1873, Sec. 8: "It shall be the duty of the health physician, and also of the clerk of the local board of health in each township, city, and village in this State, at least once in each year, to report to the State Board of Health their proceedings, and such other facts required, on blanks, and in accordance with instructions received from said State Board. They shall also make special reports whenever required to do so by the State Board of Health."

ple properly look to discover and abate any such nuisance. Freedom from such sources of sickness is believed to be one essential condition of good health in a community, and a duly empowered health officer or a board of health that from any considerations whatever does not do the utmost (and the power of a local board of health under the law is almost absolute) to prevent and remove such unsanitary conditions is guilty of a plain neglect of duty and a violation of official trust. For a valuable discussion of the power of local boards of health in the abatement of nuisances, the reader is referred to a paper on the powers and duties of local boards of health, by Hon. LeRoy Parker, of Flint, published in the Report of this Board for 1879, pages 289-.

VII. SANITARY INFORMATION SHOULD BE DISSEMINATED AMONG THE PEOPLE.—The local board of health should be a center of sanitary and hygienic intelligence for its locality; its meetings should not be infrequent, and should be so managed as to secure papers or discussions on special subjects and on the application of the principles of sanitary science to the particular sources of danger in the immediate vicinity, and otherwise to encourage progress in sanitary knowledge, among the members of the board as well as among the people. Charged, under an official oath, with the duty of guarding the life and health of fellow-citizens, the duty of members and officers of boards of health to seek out the best that is known in public hygiene and sanitary methods, seems to be plain. The best sanitary work cannot be done except by the coöperation of the people with the board of health, and this can be secured when the people are well informed on sanitary subjects; the thorough distribution by local boards of health of all such documents as the one issued by this Board on the Restriction and Prevention of Scarlet Fever and the one on the Restriction and Prevention of Diphtheria, will tend to disseminate useful information and greatly decrease sickness from such diseases.*

Many sources of information in sanitary science and public hygiene are now accessible to those who can secure the literature of these subjects. You can doubtless find something of value without great effort. There are now many works on hygiene, and many periodicals devoted to the subject,—several of them giving especial attention to particular branches of the subject. A knowledge of some of the sources of greatest danger to life in this State may be gained by a study of the Registration Reports on Vital Statistics of Michigan, published by the Secretary of State. These are, or should be, in your township library. A few years ago a pamphlet copy of the Public Health Laws of this State was sent to the health officer of each township, to be delivered to the supervisor if no other health officer was appointed. The first six Annual Reports of this State Board of Health have been sent as issued, and are, or should be, in your township library. Copies of the Fourth Annual Report of this Board (for 1876) were sent by the Board to the health officer or to the county clerks for the health officer of every township, city, and incorporated village in the State. Copies of the Fifth Report (for 1877) were sent to the county clerk (or in some cases directly to the health officer), wrapped and directed to the health officer of every township, city, and incorporated village from which a return of the

* The document on the Restriction and Prevention of Diphtheria, issued by this Board, has been stereotyped by the Board, and copies of it may be obtained by local boards of health and others of W. S. George & Co., Lansing, Mich., at the following prices, cash to accompany the order:—

100 copies for.....	\$1.75	400 copies for.....	\$4.25
200 " "	2.50	500 " "	4.75
300 " "	3.50	1,000 " "	8.00

name and address of the health officer had been received. In each case the health officer was directed to pass the Reports over to his successor in office. These Reports you should obtain from your predecessor in office, if you have not already done so, and in turn pass over to your successor. The Secretary of State has sent a copy of the Sixth Annual Report (for 1878) for each township library. A copy has also been sent by this Board to each health officer, or to the county clerks, for each health officer whose name and address has been reported to the State Board of Health. You will find something relative to work of local boards of health and health officers on pages 6, 11, 15, 16, 29, and 30 of the First Report (for 1873); on pages xi-xv, xxv, and xxviii-xxix of the Second Report; on pages xliii-xlv and 1-10 of the Third Report; on pages xxxvi, xxxvii, 6, 7, 11-12, 127, 128, 129, and 130 of the Fourth Report; on pages xxxii-xxxv of the Fifth Report (for 1877); also on pages ix-xviii and xxiii-xxxiii of the Sixth Report (for 1878).

VIII. YOUR LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH HAS TWO KINDS OF FUNCTIONS:—1. To utilize for your own people the sanitary knowledge already accessible, as indicated in sections I., III., V., VI., and VII., and elsewhere in this circular; 2. To add to the general stock of such knowledge. You can make additions to sanitary knowledge by original research, by means of records of experience, including such as may be secured by methods indicated in sections II. and IV. of this circular, by means of vital statistics, which supply an important basis for public hygiene, and by freely reporting to this Board, which will then eventually be able to give to each local board the benefits of the experience of all the others. In order to be able to report to the State Board of Health as the law requires, the local board must collect facts. If the local board does not receive notices of cases of communicable diseases, this is, in some degree, its own fault; because the law requires each member of the township board, whenever he shall “have good reason to believe” that a forfeiture from neglect to report any such case has been incurred “forthwith to give notice” to the supervisor; and it is the duty of the supervisor “forthwith to commence and prosecute a suit;” and in cities and villages, the law makes it the duty of the health officer to report to the prosecuting attorney all cases of forfeiture under sections 1734 and 1735; and the prosecuting attorney is required to prosecute for all such forfeitures.

In case any disease appears in your locality as an epidemic, please send a Special Report of the facts to this office as soon as possible. It is particularly desirable that you study and record the conditions coincident with the rise, progress, and decline of any epidemic. It is hoped that you will correspond freely with this Board. Whenever there occurs, in your locality, any outbreak of a communicable or preventable disease, it is expected that you will inquire into, study, and record the conditions coincident with the rise, progress, and decline of any such outbreak, and, besides making the local record, be prepared to make a valuable report to this Board. Every such instance of suffering in your locality should be made to yield some valuable data useful for advancing the cause of public health.

By direction of the State Board of Health.

Very Respectfully,

HENRY B. BAKER,

Secretary.

[Please preserve the circulars received from this office.]

RECORD OF CASES OF DISEASES DANGEROUS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED

RECORD NUMBER.	RECEIVED FOR RECORD.		FULL NAME OF PATIENT.	SEX.	Age in Years, last Birthday.	NAME OF DISEASE.
	Month.	Day. Year.				

IN THE OF COUNTY OF STATE OF MICHIGAN.

TAKEN SICK.		WHETHER DIED, LIVING, OR RECOVERED.		DATE OF DEATH OR RE- COVERY.		PERSONS WHO FURNISHED THE FACTS FOR RECORD.	
Month.	Day. Year.			Month.	Day. Year.	NAME.	P. O. ADDRESS.

The reported source of contagion or infection, in each case, was as follows: For the case recorded as No. it was.....

(Blank sheets of Record, similar to the form here indicated, on paper 13½ by 19½ inches, printed on both sides alike, so that it can be bound in book form, can be procured of W. S. George & Co., Lansing, Mich., for 80 cents per quire, or \$3.00 per hundred. If desired, the same dealers will bind them at usual rates.)